

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NOUAKC 01906 121449Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----107658 121500Z /50
O 121400Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1998

S E C R E T NOUAKCHOTT 1906

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DEPARTMENT PASS TO OTHER ADDRESSEES AS APPROPRIATE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, MR, AG, MO, SS
SUBJ: NEW MAURITANIAN REGIME'S FIRST OVERTURE TO THE USG

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 1873

1. SUMMARY: ACTING THROUGH ISMAEL OULD AMAR OF SNIM, THE NEW MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT HAS REQUESTED USG ASSISTANCE IN (A) CONVINCING THE ALGERIANS OF THE GIRM'S FIRM RESOLVE TOWARDS A QUICK, PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE WESTERN SAHARA CONFLICT, AND (B) WORKING WITH THEM AND THE MOROCCANS IN RESOLVING WHAT COULD BE INHERENT CONFLICT IN THE GIRM'S TWO ANNOUNCED OBJECTIVES OF PEACE IN THE WESTERN SAHARA AND CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP WITH THE MOROCCANS.

2. ISMAEL OULD AMAR, THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE MAURITANIAN NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL AND MINING COMPANY (SNIM) CALLED ON ME THIS MORNING AT HIS INITIATIVE TO PROVIDE ME WITH HIS VIEWS ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE COUP AND TO ENLIST USG SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE. HIS ACCOUNT OF THE BACKGROUND TO AND THE MODALITIES OF THE COUP AND THE MAKE-UP OF NEW GOVERNMENT WILL BE INCORPORATED IN A SERIES OF SEPTELS CONVEYING OUR ANALYSIS OF WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY AND WHAT TO EXPECT.

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3. HE OPENED BY ASKING ME IF PRESIDENT MOUSTAPHA HAD CONTACTED ME YET. WHEN I ANSWERED IN THE NEGATIVE HE STATED THAT HE KNEW THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS EAGER TO SEE ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND THAT I COULD EXPECT TO BE INVITED FOR A TALK SOME TIME TODAY. (PRESIDENT SUBSEQUENTLY CONVOKED ME AT 1830X JULY 12).

4. AFTER REITERATING NEW REGIME'S COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY, FREE ENTERPRISE, AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS, AS WELL AS ABSENCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL AFFINITY BETWEEN MAURITANIANS AND ALGERIANS, AMAR SAID THAT PRESIDENT MOUSTAPHA'S JULY 11 RADIO INTERVIEW HAD CONVEYED THE TWO MAJOR IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES OF THE NEW REGIME VIZ., (A) PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE WESTERN SAHARA PROBLEM, AND (B) CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP WITH THE MOROCCANS. I NOTED A POSSIBLE INHERENT CONFLICT IN THE PURSUIT OF THESE TWO OBJECTIVES. HE AGREED THAT THIS COULD INDEED BE THE CASE.

5. AMAR THEN CAME TO THE PRINCIPAL REASON FOR HIS VISIT. HE STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD ASKED HIM TO APPROACH ME INFORMALLY (BUT NONETHELESS OFFICIALLY) FOR USG HELP IN BRINGING A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE SAHARA CONFLICT. HE HAD

TWOSPECIFIC REQUESTS:

(A) THAT WE USE WHATEVER MEANS POSSIBLE TO ADVISE ALGERIANS THAT THE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT HERE IS QUOTE NORMALLY GOING TO LEAD TO PEACE, BUT NOT WITHOUT SOME DIFFICULTY FOR MAURITANIA. MAURITANIA WILL NEED SOME TIME IN THE COMING WEEKS TO PREPARE FOR PEACE (WITH THE HELP OF ITS FRIENDS). THEREFORE THERE IS NO NEED FOR THE ALGERIANS TO ATTACK WITHIN THE 1960 MAURITANIAN BORDER UNQUOTE. (NB: HE EMPHASIZED THE 1960).

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(B) THAT WE USE ANY INFLUENCE WE HAVE ON MOROCCANS TO CONVINCE THEM THAT THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE WESTERN SAHARA WILL INVOLVE A REFERENDUM AND THAT THEREIS NO INTEREST FOR ANY COUNTRY TO CONTINUE THIS UNFORTUNATE CONFLICT.

6. HE THEN WENT ON TO MAKE THE STARTLING OBSERVATION THAT NOT ONLY DID MAURITANIA'S ACCESSION OF THE FORMER SPANISH SAHARA VIOLATE AN INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLE BUT THAT IT ALSO VIOLATED MAURITANIA'S FORMER CONSTITUTION (TITLE I, ARTICLE 7) WHICH STATES THAT NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY SHALL BE VESTED IN THE PEOPLE WHO SHALL EXERCISE IT THROUGH THEIR REPRESENTATIVES AND BY REFERENDUM. IN ESSENCE NO TERRITORY COULD BE TAKEN OR SURRENDERED WITHOUT THE EXPRESS APPROVAL (THROUGH ELECTION OR REFERENDUM)BY OCCUPANTS OF THAT TERRITORY.

7. I TOLD OULD AMAR THAT I WOULD COMMUNICATE HIS REQUEST TO MY GOVERNMENT WITHOUT DELAY. PLEASE PROVIDE COMMENT AND GUIDANCE ASAP.

8. COMMENT: THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO REASON NOT TO BELIEVE THAT OULD AMAR WAS NOT SPEAKING AT THE SPECIFIC BEHEST OF

PRESIDENT MOUSTAPHA'S NEW GOVERNMENT. ALSO, STATEMENT IN PARAGRAPH ABOVE INDICATES THAT THIS REGIME IS INDEED SERIOUS ABOUT BREAKING SAHARA IMPASSE AND SEEKING VALID BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION.

9. MAJOR IMPONDERABLE IN SITUATION IS, OF COURSE, MOROCCAN ATTITUDE. AS HAS BEEN REPORTED ELSEWHERE, MOROCCAN DEF AGATION, PROBABLY LED BY PRIME MINISTER OSMAN, APPARENTLY CAME HERE ON JULY 11. AS YET, HOWEVER, WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO FIND OUT WHAT TRANSPIRED DURING THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH NEW MAURITANIAN REGIME. END COMMENT.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. I PLAN TO TAKE SOUNDING WITH MOUSTAPHA DURING MY AUDIENCE
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LATER TODAY IN ATTEMPT TO ASSURE THAT HE ENDORSES AQJAAK'S POSITION. AS LONG AS MOUSTAPHA DOES NOT REPUDIATE AMAR, I RECOMMEND THAT WE CONVEY LATTER'S MESSAGE TO ALGERIANS.

B. WITH RESPECT TO MESSAGE ON REFERENDUM TO MOROCCANS, MY VIEW IS THAT WE MUST KNOW MORE ABOUT MOROCCAN THINKING AND EXTENT OF MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN CONTACTS BEFORE BROACHING SUBJECT WITH MOROCCANS. DEPENDING ON WHAT I LEARN FROM MOUSTAPHA THIS EVENING, I RECOMMEND THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO EXPLORE THESE POINTS FURTHER WITH AMAR.

C. I ALSO RECOMMEND THAT WE MAKE AMAR'S DEMARCHE KNOWN TO THE FRENCH, IN PARIS AND HERE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, COALITION GOVERNMENT, CAT-B, MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NOUAKC01906
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: n/a
Format: TEL
From: NOUAKCHOTT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780769/aaaacgcm.tel
Line Count: 148
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Message ID: 9d420477-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 78 NOUAKCHOTT 1873
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2035484
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW MAURITANIAN REGIME'S FIRST OVERTURE TO THE USG
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, MR, AG, MO, SS, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9d420477-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014